

State of Idaho
2004 Legislative Session

Budget Activity Summary



Prepared by the
Division of Financial
Management

April 2004

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BUDGET ACTIVITIES
Summary

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DIVISION OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

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2004 Legislative Session Budget Activities Summary

This year's session was a considerable contrast to last year's record breaker. Last year saw a combination of budget cuts as well as a temporary increase in the sales tax from 5% to 6%. This year's session was accomplished in a straightforward manner that did not set records for being the shortest session, but was seen by many as very business-like in its approach. It produced a responsible budget that reflects current fiscal realities while preserving future options for addressing the impacts resulting from the expiration of the temporary sales tax in June 2005 when the rate returns to 5%.

Of special note was the concurrence by the Legislature of the Governor's recommendation for a salary increase for state employees. Employees have not had a funded compensation increase for two years. The resolution for FY 2005 provides a 2% increase with the possibility of an additional increase of 1% if the state ends the current fiscal year on target. The flexibility offered in the policy statement by the legislature will greatly assist agencies in addressing critical concerns that have developed in many agencies over the last two years.

Also of note is the merging of the Department of Commerce with the Department of Labor starting with the new fiscal year. The new combined department will be extending the state's efforts in economic development without requiring substantial increases in funding levels. The new Office of Science and Technology that is part of this department will be providing leadership in the growing area of technology that is a very competitive environment in the Idaho business climate.

The blueprint established for the budget for FY 2005 will be key to the longer-range budget effort that will be realized in FY 2006 when the temporary sales tax is slated to expire. Continued focus will be necessary as the economy responds to national and international events while the demand on state services responds to local impacts and requirements. The balanced budget approach that Idaho follows will keep us mindful of our responsibilities as we cautiously proceed toward our next legislative session.

Brad Foltman, Administrator
Division of Financial Management

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